

1: Mi Mi Khaing

438

AP1 Burma

Burmese AP4

[For information on regional manufacturing specialities and on the consequent inter-regional trade, see category 116, pp. 21-27 and pp. 144 ff.]

(25)

design and, within this chaste frame, the elephants, princes, trees and nat spirits waved and bounded in profusion. At the base of each bowl was a felicitous salutation inscribed on a smooth ground.

Lacquer is another industry now turning out cigar and trinket boxes, table mats, bowls and other articles for the modern market, but also continuing to supply all Burmese households with objects for daily use. When my father was stationed at Magwe, we went up the river to Pagan and from there by bullock cart to the village of Nyaung-U where the best Burmese lacquer is made. A frame of bamboo strips woven closely is covered and filled out with a mixture of cow-dung and paddy husk, and given a thick coat of black *thitsi*, wood-oil. Traditional designs are engraved on this when dry, and successive coatings of *thitsi* mixed with colouring are put on, the bowl being allowed to dry and turned on a lathe to take off the colour not required in the pattern in between each coating. The finished product is polished smooth and so flexible that a bowl can be bent till the opposite sides of its rim touch. We had lacquer boxes, *gun-its*, of great size to hold my father's turbans and my mother's scarves, round ones to hold combs and tresses for my mother's hairdressing, drinking mugs, betel boxes and many others. We had *kyauk-ka*, a more solid lacquer of plain red and black, for food carriers with plates and cups to match.

Wood seems part of the fabric of the Burmese craftsman's being. The wealth of the forests which provided teak, pyinkado, ingyin and a host of other woods for lasting structures; the perfect medium they afforded to the chisel, gouge and mallet of the carver, and the traditional forms of architecture which offered vantage points for the display of superb craftsmanship all combined to make wood-carving the most lively of Burmese arts. But wood-carving cannot be seen to advantage in domestic articles; we had carved wooden frames for photographs of monks and of Grandfather, carving on the screen which walled off the altar room, but Burmese carvers in wood had never devoted their talents to the cutting of small articles. Teak and *yamanè*, the two woods usually carved on, have a coarse grain in which fine detail cannot be rendered. Beginning from the days when the tradition was to reserve carving for the wood of sacred structures only—palaces and monasteries—the craftsman had put all his skill into animating the gables and eaves of tiered monastery roofs, palace walls and ceilings, with a riot of living ogres, nats, dancing spirits and birds surrounded by leaves, flowers and scrolls which did not leave an inch bare.

Still, the village craftsman with a talent for work in wood does not lack scope in his rural surroundings.

592 sent to stay with us at various times and were sent to schools which taught English, but nothing would persuade them to take any interest in studies. My cousin Nyein Maung, whom I liked very much, could never bear to keep a shirt on, which was why he was always to be found with only a longyi tucked around his loins playing chinlon or helping boatmen with their canoes, when he should have been sitting fully clothed in a class-room.

[601] My young Uncle Pyant, whom we called U-Ngè, small Uncle, had passed his B.A. and his law degree, and returned to Ye in preference to a more modern life in a larger town. He walled off one doorway's space from the main room of the house and filled it with bookcases, a big desk and chairs for visitors. Outside this room my Uncle Pyant put up a sign saying: "A-htet-tan shaynay gyi: Advocate and Higher Grade Pleader," and within a very short time became the lawyer of the whole village; but so great was his attachment to this consultation-living-room, which had nothing in common with the rest of Ye, that he relinquished all cases whose developing complexities led client and lawyer to a higher court in Moulmein.

592 Grandmother had gardens about ten miles up the creek from Ye.
244 These contained coconuts, durians and areca nuts grown over about
276 fifty acres for commercial disposal. Around the bungalow in the centre
427 of the garden there grew mangosteen, rambutan, pomeloes and pineapples for eating on a large-scale, clumps of bamboos, a coffee tree, tobacco plants, capsicum, lime and citron trees, lemon grass, and vegetables of all kinds to serve the needs of the bungalow and the household in town. My aunts with one young male relative took turns to live at the garden and help the family that was hired to look after it permanently. It was a dangerous life in these plantations as dacoities were very frequent.

[501] The produce was taken down to Ye in a succession of graceful narrow boats shaped out of single tree trunks. The durians and coconuts were sold straight away to traders who travelled between Moulmein and Ye for this purpose. The areca nuts were first dried on a bamboo attic made by an extension of the platform upper storey of the house until it met the back slope of the roof. When they were dried the whole family gathered around in the back kitchen and removed the husks with blunted nutcrackers, leaving the smooth nut to be sold.

244 With the rice from the paddy-land on the opposite bank, fruits,
262 vegetables and spices from the garden, rolling their cheroots with a mixture containing tobacco in leaves shed by the areca trees in the garden,
226 and grinding their own coffee berries, my aunts and grandmother only
438 needed to buy a little fish and meat for their daily consumption. This
276 they could not provide themselves owing to the Buddhist law against

taking life. Only the hardened ones of the village, *ta-nga-thè*, drew 244
 and netted in the wealth of fish around Ye, and the theoretical condem- 262
 nation in which their profession was held absolved all good Buddhists
 from any sin in eating the fruits of their labours. My aunts bought vast 226
 quantities of fish for salting and drying. This cured fish supplied our 438
 yearly needs as well as theirs. They also bought prawns to press into a
 paste called *ngapi*, in this case *seinsa ngapi*, which forms the basis of all
 our flavouring and condiments. As soon as the *ta-nga-thè* came up with
 his boatloads of prawns they were spread out on rough bamboo mats
 and sunned on the big platform behind the house. When they were
 fairly dried, my aunts, with a helper or two from the village, mashed up
 the prawns by hand, throwing in vast quantities of salt as they worked.
 The mess was left in the sun for a few days, being stirred every now and
 again. By this time it had turned into a grey-black paste, more or less
 smooth, smelling most pungent and rotten to foreigners but *hmuay-dè*,
 fragrant, to us, and tasting like a concentrate of anchovy. This paste
 is stored in small glazed earthenware jars. It is used to flavour all meat
 and vegetables dishes, or is fried or pounded with other ingredients to
 provide condiments for the meal. The Tenasserim coast is the chief
 source of *seinsa ngapi* in Burma, the big towns of Tavoy and Mergui
 supplying towns in Upper Burma as well. The large amounts of salt
 needed come from the valuable salt fields in this area which produce
 about 6,000 tons annually.

It can be imagined what excitement a holiday at Ye caused us 528
 in our growing years, and even my mother's admonitions that we were 177.
 to behave in accordance with strict Burmese ideas which prevailed at 55
 Ye rather than the un-Burmese habits acquired at school did not dampen 593
 our excitement. We were then at English-speaking schools where we
 had adopted the habit of calling each other by name. The eldest of my
 young sisters Mya Mya, is seven years younger than I am, but when she
 went to school I had only two sisters left who called me respectfully, *Ma-*
Ma Gyi, elder sister, and by the time the youngest was at school there
 was no *Ma Ma Gyi* left in the family. The tradition of the younger
 ones fetching and carrying for the elder had also sadly deteriorated.

At meals, my mother had not kept up the custom of helping the 593
 eldest person present with a portion of every dish before it was open to 177.
 the rest of the company. Before we went to Ye, therefore, my mother 57
 gathered us around her and told us how we were to behave so as to give
 our grandmother and aunts great pleasure in our visit and no rude
 shocks. "Now don't forget, *the-mi-to*, my daughters, you will all three
 call your sister Big-Elder-Sister; you, Pusu, are to call Mya Mya
 Middle-Elder-Sister, and Aye Little-Elder-Sister. In fact you should

(68)

249 kept a manager and his family in the bungalow of each plantation, and a
311 staff of eight or nine tappers. Once a week we drove out there on a
439 picnic inspection; my father and mother gazed with pride on the rows
of neat trees, walked right round to see that clearings were maintained
and that the trees looked right, peered into the cups of rich white
latex, administered rebukes and instructions and inspected the books,
visited the smoking house and saw the brown smoked sheets with GK
stamped on them, after the traditional Burmese way of married business—
G for Gyi, my mother, and K for Kaing, my father—and then we all
returned home. Chinese traders came to the house and while chewing
betel they talked about quantities and prices of the stock we had. Then
the stacked sheets came from the plantation in the two bullock carts
which we kept there, and the traders came and took them away and paid
us in cash. Business was something so foreign to what we had always
seen our parents doing, and this all seemed so simple, that we always
felt they were surely being cheated.

245 Some of the other pensioners did not believe in dabbling with com-
• 438 modities that depended on a world market. Even the way in which we
262 grew rubber went too much into the world of specialized commerce
which might have pitfalls for a retired civil servant. A friend of my
father's grew large gardens of *da-nyin*, a tree of the laburnum species.
The fruit of this tree rivals the durian for its nauseating effect on foreign
sensibilities. It does not exude a smell as the durian does, until you eat
it, but after eating it the smell comes out in breath, sweat and all other
excretions. But it is one of our favourite foods. It is a small flat circular
fruit of a hard and smooth consistency, enclosed in a shell which prises
open in neat halves like an oyster shell. The texture and taste are delici-
ous. We boil or bake it as a vegetable for fish sauce, we salt it in big
jars as a pickle, we beat it and make it swim in coconut milk and eat it as
a sweet, we bury it and make it sprout into a more pungent form called
da-nyin wet. The main point is that it is eaten in vast quantities. It
also contains substances which are good for diabetics, and families buy it
literally in hundreds. No world depression interferes with the demand
for *da-nyin thi*, and though the sale price is low, overhead charges are
almost nil.

243 Other families in Thaton got their extra income from paddy-land.
438 Although the rice for which Burma is so famous today did not enter
556 world markets till the latter half of the last century, the possession of
262 *le*, fields, which is synonymous with paddy-fields, is a well established
form of wealth. Our part of Burma is particularly rich in fields. Nearly
all the 3,500,000 tons of rice which is exported annually from Burma
comes from Lower Burma, where Tenasserim Division ranks among the

(69)

three most productive areas, and Thaton district takes first place in 243
 Tenasserim. But rice is more than the chief export crop of the country 438*
 to us. It is our *wun-sa*, food for the womb, our staple food; and we have 556
 depended so much on it that we pay it reverence, almost. When we 262
 were young, A-Kyi and our nurses never allowed us to tread on any rice
 that had been spilt; rice was like a master and human beings its servants,
 they said. The phrase for "I was not born yesterday" is "I grew [181]
 up eating rice", and in the same way excessive stupidity excites wonder
 that the person nourished on rice can be so stupid. Through years of
 journeying on trains, bullock carts, and river steamers, we have seen the
 peaceful green fields, the dry reaped corn, the golden grain heaped on
 small canoes before milling. Though we did not know the toil and
 the uncertain hopes of the cultivators, we followed the growth of the
 life-giving grain through all its stages, seeing the first sproutings in one
 place in one year, the ripe and mature crop in another, and the thriving
 young stalks of a later generation in another place and time.

Our fields seemed perpetually marked into small beds by ridges six 243
 inches high. Lying empty during the first months of the year, these
 beds grew parched and baked by April and May. With the first blessed
 showers of the monsoon about mid-May, however, one, two, three, four
 or more inches of rain fell on the
 beds within about ten days, and
 softened the hard crust. Men
 went to work about the end of the
 month, and with harrow and
 plough they chopped and churned
 up the earth, cutting and burying
 weeds, refining the rough, and
 making the stiff clay soil pliant
 until a soft fine mud was produc-
 ed. In the meantime, the seeds
 had been soaked in water in deep
 layers between banana leaves, to
 make them sprout and become
 more receptive of the soil's rich-
 ness. These were brought out in
 baskets, and young men and wo-
 men wearing wide bamboo hats in
 the heavy showers, walked about
 scattering them, using up to ten
 bushels in one acre. They
 allowed the seeds to lie for a few



the sameik by using an uncoiled dry and slightly wavy tress to offer, a 302
 wanton contrast to the smooth severe cylinder. In the absence of per- 177.
 manent waving, and with the straightness of the Burmese hair, I admired 30
 the enterprise of a Rangoon family who subsidized, with supplies of coco-
 nut oil, the Indian gardener next door, an Oriya coming from a race with
 wavy raven locks, until his tresses grew to the requisite length and they
 bought them for binding into a sameik. This sameik is discarded after 302
 marriage, but in the case of a girl who does not get married early, it con- 177.
 tinues in a more restrained form, a *sameik-twin*, when it is tucked back 30
 into the bottom of the cylinder to form a loop. Shortly after the 561
 age of twenty-five, she discards it altogether and makes just a sadone
 like a married woman. Kyi-Kyi's sadone was broad and low; after she
 had finished the rest of her toilet she tied her hair by drawing a thread
 backwards from her forehead so that stray hairs were tucked into the
 sadone, and the same with the upswept hair at the back. She also car-
 ried the Burmese powder puff in her luggage though I never saw her use
 it. These, which we also still use as the best means of applying Max
 Factor powder, were scraps of old cotton vests, about ten inches square,
 which had been soaked and washed in thanakha, thus avoiding the
 horrible newness of the unused modern powder puff.

My aunt's clothes were also aggressively her own. This was notice- 291
 able especially with her going-out clothes, for which she would never 438.
 have any imported materials. She declared that imported silks, crêpe- 296
 de-chines and the like, could not be washed and beaten clean like the 177.
 Burmese silks and cottons. Neither did they produce suitable colours 29
 and designs for elderly spinster ladies like her—they were either gay and
 skittish, or of a soberness that depressed without pleasing one. What
 she loved most were the *ya-khaing* longyis, silks and cottons woven in
 Arakan, in small check patterns, but so stout that you soaked them and
 beat them hard before the first wearing, and then washed them again and
 again until you had a pliant closely-woven fabric whose colour and fresh-
 ness lasted a lifetime. One of my sisters, whom my aunt pressed to wear a
ya-khaing longyi in preference to a crêpe-de-chine piece whose bright
 butterflies had appealed to her sixteen-year-old fancy, stated that no
 doubt if she slept in the *ya-khaing* longyi every night for seven years, it
 would just be at its best for her to wear when she reached the age of
 twenty-five. For more dressy occasions, my aunt wore *zin-mè* silks, the 291
 design of which was reputed to come from Chiangmai in Siam, and in
 imitation of which Burmese weavers now produce *zin-mè* longyis in dull
 red and green geometrical designs, like old lacquer colours. Kyi-Kyi
 sometimes wore *Bangkuk* longyis also, said to come truly from Bangkok,
 but more often woven in Burma in imitation of the characteristic twist

291 In the weave. These were produced in smoky blues, ambers and dull greens so beloved of elderly Burmese ladies.

286 Silk weaving is one of the old industries of Burma, but the yarn is
 438 mostly imported, for the rearing of silkworms, like fishing, is a form of
 taking life. Fortunately, around Prome on the central Irrawaddy, there
 live a tribe of hill people called Yabeins who are animists and may safely
 cultivate the *po-sa*, worm food mulberry tree. The silk from here is
 coarse, but is used for the weaving of the most elaborately patterned
 silks called *cheik*. These valuable pieces are used for wedding skirts
 and ceremonial wear. Few people possess more than one *cheik* skirt;
 the great number of spools—a hundred or more—necessary to produce
 the intricate patterns in minute waves of blended colours makes the
 prices vary from Rs. 40/- to Rs. 400/- per piece, a high price compared to
 the present imported silks. All the weaving is done by handlooms,
 rectangular frames about five feet long, holding the warp threads of four
 yards in length and 40 to 45 inches in width, operated by girls sitting
 on high stools, raising the alternate threads by a foot-pedal, and banging
 the pushboard against the woven threads each time they throw the spool
 across by pulling on a cord, producing eventually an *ok*, a book, a piece
 for two skirts folded flat and stiff like a book.

With imported yarns dyed with native vegetable dyes, the weavers
 at Mandalay, Amarapura, Prome and Shwedaung, Kyangin, Tavoy,
 Kindat and the Yaw valley produced silks of exquisite pinks, blue-
 greys, gold and amber, strong reds and purples, dull dirty greens, all
 from the sunset skies, water-vegetation, birds and trees, never fading:
pan-nu, kho, mi-go, hpet-hpu, ma-yan, pasun-hai, payin, kyet-thway,
yay-hnyi, a-sein-bok: tender flowers, dove, smoke, leaf-bud, marian
 seed, prawn oil, amber, cock's blood, slime-moss, rotten vegetation.
 Plain colours, checks, stripes and geometrical designs all cost only
 Rs. 3/- or Rs. 5/- or, perhaps, Rs. 10/- per piece and could be washed
 forever. No wonder Kyi-Kyi did not understand why we bought imported
 silks. She did not understand the desire for novelty, for frivolity of birds,
 giant flowers or sprouting fruit such as are never seen on land or sea.

264 This is for the fresh bazaar, most families storing rice, saltfish and
511 ngapi, and sesamum oil for cooking, by the month or longer periods.

252 The rice is cooked to result in clean and separate grains. The usual
262 method is to put it on the fire with cold water, using judgment as to the
amount of grain and water for the pot. A person who cannot "cut his
coat according to his cloth" is "*ko-oh hnin ko hsan ma-tan bè* : his grain
and pot do not accord". When, after coming to the boil, the rice is
cooked but not yet soft, it is drained by decanting; the water is kept aside
for starching the jackets of the women in the daily wash, and the pot is
put back on to coals or half off a fire, with the lid left open to let the
steam escape and complete the cooking of the rice. It is shaken once or
twice during this process, but there is no harm done if a bad servant
forgets to do this or puts the pot back on a strong fire, for then the burnt
rice is scraped up in a cake (*gyo*) and is eaten, dipped in oil and salt, by
the children with great relish.

The soup is always clear. The great majority of soups are plain
hingyos, with a stock of fish, prawn or dried prawn; flavoured with ngapi,
beaten garlic or onion. It is made fresh for each soup, and when it
comes to the boil, green vegetables are thrown in and left just long
enough to wear down the tough cellulose. The vegetables are never
overcooked. Throwing in the vegetables is called *hingyo hkut-tè*, ladling
out the soup, and the green things for ladling are numerous indeed. Of
leaves, the tamarind, the sorrel, the drumstick (*moringa pterygosperma*),
the *kinmun*, the calabash, the mustard, various types of spinach, are only
some. Some particular leaves, stalks or fruits require adaptations in
the soup they ladle; for example, green chillies with the sorrel, pepper
corns with the calabash; and the neem and *mezali* leaves are so bitter that
they must be rubbed in salt and cooked three times before they can be
eaten. All leaves used for soup have a distinct and delicate flavour. If
the soup were strained after the leaves had been boiled in it a few
minutes, one could still identify the taste. Richer soups are made with
stock of meat—pig's trotters, chicken or duck—and are ladled with dried
mushrooms, dried flowers or vermicelli strands, transparent and fair as
the lotus.

263 The ngapi, condiment, dish has several standard forms. "Ngapi"
• [438] is the general term applied to any of its forms. Usually it comes to the
housewife as *seinsa ngapi*, from Tenasserim, such as is made by my aunts
in Ye, or from Yandoon in the Delta region. This high-smelling,
strongly flavoured paste is stored in glazed earthen jars and flavours
almost all dishes or is cooked into its own palatable forms. It is fried
with chillies and pounded dried prawns into a crisp brownness, in which
form Europeans like it as a toast spread which they call *balachaung*. It

(114)

361 teachers. There were similar colonies of Burmese in the eastern parts
177. of Rangoon—Yegyaw, Bahan, Tamwe and Pazundaung—but none so
96 pleasant as Kemmendine.

361 When we were young, my mother's stock of household goods bought
from their places of manufacture had shown us all the small industries
of Burma. Now my sisters appeared to be as determined to do my
Rangoon shopping from the most orthodox sources, and I learnt that to
fit me out with a new set of Burmese clothes required the services and the
varied talents of all communities of the cosmopolitan city. Imported
silks, which were bought for longyis in addition to native silks, were the
monopoly of merchants from Sind and Bikaner—houses of Ramchandra,
Tejuma, Lekraj and others—who had set up windows in the modern Scott
Market of Rangoon, and whose salesmanship had flowered in Burma into
something vastly different from the nonchalance which they display in
their native land. They offered cigarettes to casual buyers who fingered
the usual run of silks, supplemented them with sweet coloured drinks
from the sherbet stall behind the shops when they went on to more
expensive satins, and if they ventured further into fine brocades and laces,
dishes of ice-cream appeared as they waited for the material to be cut and
measured.

Cotton longyis for day and night wear in the house took us to the
western Burmese quarter of Rangoon. Here, in Goods Bazaar Row, the
family firm of *U Hsin-Daw Htay*: husband and wife married in business,
lived in the upper floor of their house, and stacked the lower floor with
hundreds of cotton prints, made in Japan but manufactured with such
an eye to Burmese requirements as regards texture, colours, design and
width, that these *tha-yet-hte* longyis, as they were called, seemed to
most people as Burmese as Bassein umbrellas or Mandalay slippers.
All over Burma the women wore these longyis. The transplanters of
the paddy, the young servant maids in a-so-ya mins' houses, the girls in
Ye and a thousand other villages, women in bazaars and minkadaws
themselves, all wore various qualities of bright *tha-yet-hte* prints bought
for 10 annas to Re. 1/4 a longyi length of 1½ yards. *U Hsin* and *Daw
Htay* were prosperous; we bought our longyis from them through snob-
bery, in lots of ten, sitting barefooted on their mat-covered floor, with
betel box in front of us, but it was possible to buy *tha-yet-hte* from
the stalls of young Burmese women all along the big Soortee Bazaar
and the Scott Market of the Town. These young women form one of
Burma's fairest sights.

361 In the days of my schooling, when each new term plunged me into
437 the foreign world behind Convent walls, as my mother completed the
shopping for it on the last day of each vacation, I gazed back with longing

and envy at these fair creatures who continued work and home in one long pleasant Burmese continuity. They are girls from the ages of sixteen upward. Probably their parents set them up in these stalls, each separated from its neighbour by a stack of cotton bales, six or seven stalls on a long platform. They come there in the mornings, dressed in crisp muslin jackets and bright longyi, their faces powdered with thanakha and the Five B's, flowers in their hair, and fragrant ground bark on their hands and feet. They open up shop and dust with feather brooms while they shout across to each other the news of the previous evening. Then the whole day unfolds, calling out to food sellers and treating their friends to a succession of delicacies, button-holing the young boy who hawks magazines and tuppenny novels, and reclining against a pile of the tha-yet-hte longyi to read these romances, helping each other to fold up the pieces after a troublesome customer has gone, anything but making an earnest business of their profession. They always looked so cool and pretty and indifferent beside the small Indian storekeepers who flanked their platforms and solicited passers-by for patronage. "Oh to be a bazaar girl!" I still thought when I was in the University; "to pass unchaperoned days, reading novels and eating sweets, to have time to be powdered and neatly dressed, and only now and then be disturbed by someone who wants to buy a longyi."

Our starched white muslin jackets are made out of fine transparent muslin manufactured in England, and sent out in bales of 11 yards with the quality stamped in Burmese characters, and on the jacket a florid illustration of the quality-name—names such as *Nat-thami*, *Sein ta-hsok*, *Shwe Pan-gaing*, *Mè Ngo*: Heavenly Damsel, Cluster of Diamonds, Golden Spray of Flowers, Dusky Maiden—and imported by both Indian and Burmese traders.

The making up of the jackets was the monopoly of Chinese tailors; our *tayok-kalay*, little Chinaman, lived in the crowded quarter of Yegyaw in a barnlike room which was carpenter's shop at one end and tailor's at the other. The tailor's end had a row of shelves along the wall in to which the finished garments and uncut material were shoved, higgledy-piggledy in paper bags on which the merest scribble denoted owner and date of order. In front of this was the counter on which the cutter was at work, and separating it from the carpentry end was a table at which one or two half-clad men always seemed to be eating noodles or reading a Chinese newspaper, of which there were three in Rangoon. In spite of this, the *tayok-kalay* never confused an order for garments which had to fit so meticulously and always delivered them in a snow-white condition. He charged 9 annas for each fine handsewn garment, and for modern girls managed to cut twelve out of the eleven-yard piece. This

361
438.294
439
563294
563
441
465

441

563

semi-precious stones, or gold dust, all cut with many tiny facets. We once had in our house a heavy glass vase, imported by an English firm, of a dull bluish-black colour. One day a wind mercifully blew the vase on to the floor where it broke into a hundred pieces. My cousin gathered up the pieces and the next time she went to Mandalay her button cutter fashioned them into several sets of round sparkling buttons catching the light and showing now black, now grey, now blue, one set of which I wear to this day. These and the velvet slippers which are universally worn were sold in the market by young Burmese women sitting opposite the tha-yet-hte longyi sellers. The slippers also came from Mandalay, and in the days of the last Burmese king, the common people were forbidden to wear them; they were reserved for royal use alone.

• [438]
[565]

265

563

At last my sisters considered that I was suitably dressed as the elder sister of such fashionable young ladies as they had now grown into, and equipped to attend any social function of the town. Although Burmese people love gathering to eat and drink, hotels and restaurants did not exist in Rangoon society. Both the Western restaurants where people danced and drank alcoholic drinks, and the leading Chinese restaurants where the dolled-up Chinese waitresses served the male customers with playful attentions, were out of bounds for Burmese women, and therefore not greatly frequented by Burmese men either, except in the case of the Chinese hotels as a carousal. Night bazaars were, however, eminently respectable, all Rangoon families being addicted to the habit of eating out as a supper after their dinner at home. They drove in cars to the pavement stalls of Chinatown, Moghul Street and Yegyaw; at Burmese stalls they got out and squatted on the benches provided, while the seller served them from the cooking pot beside her; at Indian and Chinese shops they had a plank thrust through to rest on the doors of the car, and ate sitting there. After eating rich Mohammedan food or delicious Chinese dishes, they drove a few streets further on to eat in the same fashion at an ice-cream or sherbet stall. It was a good life indeed.

546

177.

54

We usually did this after the cinema. While we went to see American films, my mother and her friends invariably went to a Burmese film. There were four Burmese cinema halls in Rangoon, whose box offices were always besieged, but in spite of this the cinema industry in Burma was not a thriving one. Actors and actresses were poor and suffered a social stigma. About twenty-five feature films were produced in Rangoon each year, both sound and silent, by companies whose prosperity never lasted more than a few years. They could often be seen filming their outdoor scenes round the Royal Lakes, the University Estate and the fields around Mingaladon, using studios only for indoor scenes. In spite of this, the effects aimed at were ambitious, especially in the earlier

where some sturdy tree refuses to fall, and the clearing it away becomes a matter of very considerable danger. This taung-ya system is very wasteful as well as laborious, and annually draws down upon itself the denunciations of the English forest officers. But the hill-tribes who adopt it are too few to support themselves in any other way. They were long ago driven out of the plains by the Burmans, and now cling to their old nomadic life with a degree of obstinacy which Government officials, in a variety of ways, have found is not to be tempted by any tale of the present security and plenty of the low country, or even of the valleys among the hills. Rice, therefore, continues to be produced with the minimum and the maximum of labour; but none of the hill rice ever finds its way out of the country, and seldom even down to the plains.

The rice season, as far as the English merchant is concerned, commences in January and ends about May; but though this is pre-eminently the "busy season," there are purchases made in greater or less quantities all the year round. The relations between the great English rice firms and the simple jungle cultivators have not always been of a very elevating character, and it can hardly be denied that the fault lies wholly at the door of the foreigner. Missionaries in Burma are wont to mourn that their teachings are often rendered wholly nugatory by the want of scruple, and it might almost be said of honour, displayed by the great Rangoon rice firms. The good padres teach their proselytes that Christians are all honest and truthful. The ingenuous lads enter as clerks in a rice-mill and discover that Englishmen scarcely differ from the "poor heathen," except in being more lordly in the way of doing the thing.

Years ago, when there were not nearly so many mills as there are now, and not a quarter so many ships in the harbour during the rice season, things went on pretty equably. One day one firm would give a rupee or so more per hundred baskets, and the next day it would be another. But soon the mills began to increase in number and more ships came, and it was harder to get paddy. Then rival firms began to bid against each other. There was demurrage before their eyes, and it was terribly expensive work keeping the mill

Be
241
313
[185]

Be
563
241
439

Be
361
243
438
563

Be
361
243
442
563
175

the Scotch engineer, is not looking. There is a cluster of Chinese carpenters, chipping away with their queer thick-headed axes and planes, which, with characteristic perversity, they pull towards them, instead of pushing away as other workmen do. Here is M——, the English "assistant" at the mill, his hat and coat all covered with rice-dust, which hangs in queer fashion on his eyebrows and moustache. He is in high spirits. "We've got twenty-four pair of stones going to-day, more than anybody else in the creek;" and he goes off to see how the Burmese girls are stitching up the rice-bags, a duty of which he is particularly fond, and over which he spends a quite unnecessary amount of time. There is R——'s voice on the other side of the creek. He is storming at some men in the cargo-boat, who have done something wrong—anchored in the wrong place, or not started for the upper mill at Kemendine last night as they ought to have done. R—— has a voice which is the terror of every loitering coolie and dawdling boat-wallah in his employ; and he will be as hoarse as a North Sea pilot by nightfall, and will want a "double-barrelled" whisky and soda to moisten him before dinner. He wants company down to "the Point," and presently comes skimming across in his gig, manned by Chittagonian Kalassies, and we drop down the creek—they call small rivers creeks in the East—to where it joins with the main Rangoon stream. The Pegu river, tapping the country north-east and north of Rangoon, comes in at the same place; and there is a great crowd of paddy-boats here in the early morning. Each firm has its brokers, middlemen who make the purchases from the farmers that come down with their grain. They have been here since daylight, and fly about in their little dug-outs from one seller to another. The great point in a broker seems to be power of lungs and fluency in abuse. The amount of yelling that goes on at "Monkey Point" would silence the bookmakers' ring at Epsom on a Derby day.

R—— has not come down to this pandemonium for nothing. There are a couple of big ships in, which must be filled, or there will be demurrage to pay, and a "canal-wallah" is expected this afternoon or to-morrow morning; so that the wheels must be kept going their hardest.

Be
Ba

361
256
463
563

Be
[133]

256
438 ●
442

000

000 related by some foreigners of the burial of the fish in the earth for periods varying from a week to a year (!) are due either to a guileless nature or a too powerful imagination. The soil of Burma needs no manure.

263 The fish most sought after for *damin ngapi* are those
252 belonging to the family of cat- and dog-fish, from the circumstance that they have no scales, and therefore make a smoother compound. Some of these attain a huge size, the tame dog-fish at Thihadaw, above Mandalay, being quite five feet long, and blessed with mouths that would take in a leg of mutton. Many of them also have the peculiarity of breathing air, rising to the surface of the water and opening their mouths for the purpose; while, when the inland pools dry up after the rains are past, they are capable of making long journeys overland.

Seinsa ngapi is made entirely from prawns, and comes chiefly from the Tenasserim coast, Beit (the English Mergui) and Tavoy being the centres of its manufacture. The prawns are spread out on mats in the sun as soon as caught and left there till they are fairly well dried. Then they are mashed up by hand, abundance of salt being added, and are stirred up several times a day regularly for three days, lying out in the sun all the time. After that, the paste is ready for use, and is packed in small jars. Properly, *seinsa* is that made from the prawns exposed immediately after being caught. When some hours elapse before they are spread out to dry, the resulting *ngapi* is called *yetpyan*; and if a whole day elapses before the exposure, *yet-ök*. The greater the delay, the more powerful the smell and the more piquant the flavour—a fact for Englishmen to remember when they take *balachong*. *Ket ngapi* is simply a variety made of large prawns, which are heavily pressed in baskets called *ket*, before they are put out in the sun to dry. They are then pounded with salt and pressed again, after which they are ready for consumption, either as they are or after frying.

263 Notwithstanding the open disfavour with which the
● 438 English regard *ngapi*, the Burmese hold by it as the most savoury and necessary portion of their dinner, and vast quantities are exported to Upper Burma, where the manufacture, owing to the smaller fisheries, is not equal to the

demand. The indignation which a crusade against the condiment by a young civil officer with more zeal than discretion caused in 1880, will not soon be forgotten. Cholera was rather bad in Yandun, one of the great places for ngapi, and the Assistant Commissioner, convinced that the heavy smells must be the cause of it, issued an order forbidding the manufacture of the fish-paste, or its sale in the public markets, as well as that other cherished but strong-smelling dainty, prawn-head oil. The result was an avalanche of petitions to the Chief Commissioner, and something very like open riot in the town. Equanimity was not restored till the too energetic official was removed to another station, and the luyis pointed exultantly to the fact that as soon as they began to make up arrears in the way of ngapi consumption, cholera left the place. Nevertheless, Yandun is not a charming place of residence to a man with a sensitive nose.

263
438 ●

Fishermen are promised terrible punishments in a future life for the number of lives they take, but popular sympathy finds a loophole of escape for them. They do not actually kill the fish. These are merely put out on the bank to dry, after their long soaking in the river, and if they are foolish and ill-judged enough to die while undergoing the process, it is their own fault. Nevertheless, some strict people hold by the doctrine of the Manichæans, who asserted that the soul of the farmer migrated into herbs so that it might be cut down and thrashed out. The baker becomes bread and is eaten. The killer of a deer becomes a deer; of a fish, a fish; and so on. But nevertheless, if all the fishermen became monks one day, the next would see some of the pious trying their hands with the cast-net.

226
779

536

who cannot stay over the night, or when a local feast, limited in its time, occurs. The great and legitimate season is the night, and frequently a play, especially a puppet play, extends over six or seven successive nights. The majority of the audience stay the whole time, from seven or eight o'clock at night till sunrise. It is not, however, to be supposed that they hear it all through. Abundance of mats and rugs are brought, and not a few, after listening till midnight or thereabouts, calmly curl themselves up to sleep, and slumber away for two or three hours, heedless of the braying of the horns and the crash of the cymbals only a few yards off. Then they wake up and fall in with the progress of the piece with as keen interest as if they had heard every word of it. Most of the young people, however, prime themselves with the anti-soporific le'hpet, "pickled tea," as the English call it, and bid defiance to drowsiness. This condiment is as regular a crown to a Burmese dinner as cheese is to an English one, and with the same idea, possibly erroneous in both cases, that it promotes digestion. It is almost exclusively produced in Taungbaing, in the Shan country, by a hill tribe called Rumai, better known by the Burmese name of Palaungs. The Burmese mix with it salt, garlic, and assafoetida, douse it in oil, and add a few grains of millet seed. The leaves forming the basis are the leaves of an actual tree, as distinguished from the bushes of China and Assam. Hooker called it *Elæodendron orientale*, while Anderson asserted that it was really *E. persicum*. Of late years Assam planters have bought Taungbaing seed for their gardens. One of the grievances which Englishmen have when they attend a pwè is that they are always induced by their host to take pickled tea, and perceive in it nothing but the overpowering horrors of the assafoetida. Pwès and assafoetida are therefore associated with one another to the detriment of both.

263

[563]

● [438]

533

Few foreigners can detect one tune from another, or the recitative from any one of them. Consequently most declare there is only one tune, or no tune at all, according to the capacity of generosity in them. The same thing has been said by an inappreciative Burman of the "vipers" of the Royal Scots Fusiliers. He admired the conscientiousness

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

5

II

MAKING A LIVING

Occupations

463

The occupational pattern in Tadagale is a highly diversified one. There are thirty-eight principal gainful occupations in which a total of 341 individuals are engaged. A large proportion of these people have secondary and even tertiary pursuits at which they spend part of their time in order to round out a living. The following table shows the outstanding principal occupations in order of frequency.

Table II

Principal Occupations of Villagers

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>No.</u>
Gardener	52
Bus operator (driver, spare)	44
Paddy cultivator	43
Field laborer	38
Dairy farmer	26
Prepared foods seller	20
Urban laborer	19
Trader (middleman)	17
Shopkeeper	15

Some of the other principal occupations, of lesser frequency, are carpenter, fisherman, casual laborer, cowherd, woodcutter, and seamstress.

1. Gardening. The leading mode of making a living is truck gardening. The gardens are located on small patches of ground adjoining dwellings, and range in size from tiny plots up to perhaps 3000 square feet. They are cultivated intensively, four crops a year being usual, and six crops not unknown. The crops include gourds, cucumbers, mustard, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, radishes and spinach.

244

For all households, the garden supplies the family with the many vegetables that form an indispensable part of the various Burmese curries. Many gardens produce a surplus which is sold in nearby town bazaars or in the larger markets of Rangoon. The trend has been for gardening to become increasingly important as a source of income in recent years, particularly during the period of disturbed conditions in Burma. These conditions have seriously impeded the normal flow of fresh vegetables and fruits to Rangoon from more distant points; thus the people of Tadagale have been provided with an opportunity to secure high prices for almost all the vegetables they can supply.

244
178
443
438

14

178
463
An increase has occurred in the number of individuals engaged in small-scale middleman trading. Such manufactured items as candles, mats, jewelry, and books are bought in Rangoon and sold increasingly in the village and nearby.

Wage labor of an unskilled sort has increased. Some villagers have found jobs in a warehouse in Rangoon, others in a mental hospital not far from the village. A very small number have become office and clerical workers.

Unemployment is said to be a new development, although these people are only a few.

178
433
b. Resources. Both cultivated land and grazing land resources have declined. The grazing land is very badly eroded, with little grass left. Fishing resources remain steady; the large Pazundaung Creek at the eastern edge of the village yields as many fish as ever.

178
438
c. Imports. There has been a decrease, as indicated earlier, in the amount of Burma-grown cotton that comes into the village for making of clothing. A variety of miscellaneous food items, such as salt, dried chilis, cigars, cooking oil, betel, potatoes, onions, and various spices are obtained from the outside as much as in the past. Increasingly sought beyond the village are building materials, housewares of all types, clothing, and medicine.

d. Exports. The amount of rice sold has declined, while the sale of cooked foods, fresh vegetables, labor and services has increased.

In 1949-50 the villagers of Tadagale felt that their economic lot had worsened over the preceding several years, owing to the aftermath of World War II and the instability prevailing in Burma. The most pressing felt needs were for land and the curbing of inflationary high prices, and hope was expressed that the plans of the national government in these and other matters might bring some measure of relief.

62 THE SOUL OF A PEOPLE CH.

In two or three attempts that he made to oppose the troops he was signally worsted, so he was obliged to change his tactics. He decided to boycott the enemy. No Burman was to accept service under him, to give him information or supplies, to be his guide, or to assist him in any way. This rule Maung Yaing made generally known, and he announced his intention of enforcing it with rigour. And he did so. There was a head man of a village near Shemmaga whom he executed because he had acted as guide to a body of troops, and he cut off all supplies from the interior, lying on the roads, and stopping all men from entering Shemmaga. He further issued a notice that the inhabitants of Shemmaga itself should leave the town. They could not move the garrison, therefore the people must move themselves. No assistance must be given to the enemy. The villagers of Shemmaga, mostly small traders in salt and rice, were naturally averse to leaving. This trade was their only means of livelihood, the houses their only homes, and they did not like the idea of going out into the unknown country behind. Moreover, the exaction by Maung Yaing of money and supplies for his men fell most heavily on the wealthier men, and on the whole they were not sorry to have the English garrison in the town, so that they could trade in peace. Some few left, but most did not, and though they collected money, and sent it to Maung Yaing, they at the same time told the English officer in command of Maung Yaing's threats, and begged that great care should be taken of the town, for Maung Yaing was very angry. When he found he could not cause the

1
721
175
579

[438]

200 THE SOUL OF A PEOPLE CH.

443 gauzy silk handkerchiefs ; but often these are sold
286 at separate stalls.

But prettier than the silks are the sellers, for these are nearly all girls and women, sweet and fresh in their white jackets, with flowers in their hair. And they are all delighted to talk to you and show you their goods, even if you do not buy ; and they will take a compliment sedately, as a girl should, and they will probably charge you an extra rupee for it when you come to pay for your purchases. So it is never wise for a man, unless he have a heart of stone, to go marketing for silks. He should always ask a lady friend to go with him and do the bargaining, and he will lose no courtesy thereby, for these women know how to be courteous to fellow-women as well as to fellow-men.

443 , In the provincial bazaars it is much the same.
369 There may be a few travelling merchants from
438 Rangoon or Mandalay, most of whom are men ;
442 but nearly all the retailers are women. Indeed, speaking broadly, it may be said that the retail trade of the country is in the hands of the women, and they nearly all trade on their own account. Just as the men farm their own land, the women own their businesses. They are not saleswomen for others, but traders on their own account ; and with the exception of the silk and cloth branches of the trade, it does not interfere with home-life. The bazaar lasts but three hours, and a woman has ample time for her home duties when her daily visit to the bazaar is over ; she is never kept away all day in shops and factories.

Her home-life is always the centre of her life ;

- 15 -

If there are many fish, if the water is bad they may die off - and do not come down to the HSE. When the water is good we get many fish. When the water is bad it is called YH-HAH-DE (the water is hurt). When the water is bad they die off on their own and become putrid on this side; they do not come down. When the water is bad it stops the coming down of fish even more effectively than if a YIN barrier were put up (further upstream.) They do not come down to the mouth of the HSE.

226
221
132

There are 80 or 100 fishermen working at the CHANG-MA-GHI IN where I work. Thirty of these are from YMA-GHI-SAT and they are the only IN workers there, although there are 7 other INS in the neighbourhood. They work for 6 months out of the year. During the month of TAGU when the fish is sold, we start on the YIN and work through the months of KASON, MATON, MISO, WAGONG, TANTHALIN and in TANTHALIN we place it in the IN. Water comes down and with it the fish, and we end up about the month of PIATHO. In the hot season we catch the remaining fish and after the hot season the INS are again sanctioned by the Government.

226

Night and day the fish are coming down and they have to be gathered up in wicker baskets and poured into tubs. They are coming down all the time. We have no special work time; both night and day. That is why there have to be so many workers. We have watches. If this person watches this night, that person watches the next night and another person the next night. They have to stay till morning. The person who has watched up till morning is given a turn (to rest) and another person placed there for the next night. The fisherman works for a day and a night. Then shifts are changed. The man who worked from the afternoon is given a rest in the morning. There are shifts of eight to nine men at a time. These nine men are changed after a day and a night. They rest for a day and a night.

226
461

Some of the more common fish are: Nga Thaing, Nga Gyin, Nga Gyawing, Nga Nyit Chin, Nga Dan, Nga Myin Yin; small fish are plentiful, Nga Khanna, Nga Hpare Aung, Nga Bat, Nga Hmu, Nga Gyi; you get a lot. During one shift, (one day and one night) 2000 fish may come down, 3000 fish may come, or there may be 500, or there may be only 100. You cannot say for sure. At the end of the SHAW the fish are scooped up with kerosene tins and poured into the boat with wicker baskets. After that they are taken home. We take both big and small fish. The big ones are caught by hand and kept alive in big tubs, and it is the small fish that are scooped up with kerosene tins. We take all the fish that are stranded at the sluice end. The tiny fish escape through the YIN. Some larger fish also escape if the YIN cracks are wide.

The large fish are kept alive and sent to the Bangoon markets and to various towns. They usually stay alive this way. When the distance is great they are placed in ice and sent. The other fish are dried or made into fish paste or MIAPI. In making Ngapi, the heads are first cut off. The scales are removed by wrapping the fish in gunny-bags and stamping with the feet after the bag has been placed in a tub. After that they are washed and salt is put in. After mixing thoroughly with salt they are pressed into jars. Those who want to pound their fish into MIAPI DAUNG (pounded ngapi) leave their fish to become putrid and then pound them. Those who want to keep them raw (ANIN) do not.

226
438
263

Ma Aye Mying describes the preparation of ngapi as follows:-

The fish have to be chopped and placed in water; after the scales are removed, the fishes are chopped and placed in water for a night. In the morning the putrid fish are taken out, mixed with salt and laid out to dry. In the evening they are again mixed with salt and pounded. You pound the fish today, lay

251
263

it out to dry in the sun throughout the next day, then pound again and store in jars. The total process takes two days."

U Myaing continues his explanation of the IN fishery:-

"The fishery is worked on a co-operative basis. We contribute equal sums of money. If one puts up Rs. 100/- all put up Rs. 100/-; if Rs. 1000/- all put up Rs. 1000/- each. We group together and work. Rights to the site of the fishery must be secured from the government by auction. We have to make an initial payment of about Rs. 1000/- or Rs. 2000/- and in bidding among ourselves the price increases to eight thousand, nine thousand, ten thousand, twelve thousand. The original price was three thousand rupees. This is the cost of the Deputy Commissioner's auction. There were many bidders at the auction for the IN. Four, five, six. For example if I give a thousand rupees you offer two thousand, he gives three, four, five thousand When it comes to the hand of the successful bidder the price has increased. The money for the fishery rights have to be paid in later (after the fishing has begun). For example if I pay in a thousand rupees this month, I pay a thousand the next month and the next, in several instalments. This is in addition to the amount we sink into the actual working of the business. (Cost of constructing the IN and equipment)."

"The fishermen do not get paid a salary. They have shares. Accounts are kept of how much fish is caught, how much sold, and only after the IN has been worked to the end of the season is everything cleared up. Each fisherman gets only one share, and the profits are equally divided. We have to pay equal amounts of money for the IN and the money we get from the IN is the same for each of us. We all group and work together. There are some INS where one takes the lead and engages all the men and works it for himself. What he gets he keeps for himself. He pays the wages. In selling, we discuss the matter among ourselves and then sell. The four or five elders get together and if they decide to sell this kind of fish for this price, it is sold."

"As one of the elders, I go alone and bid at the auctioning in the Deputy Commissioner's office. I also supervise the actual fishing saying to the other fishermen - "Do this, and this and this." I have a list of what things they need and have to go and buy these things for them. I have to buy poles, I have to buy IN bamboo, I have to buy all the implements which are to be used. I have to collect money, and buy all the implements used in the IN. I have to keep accounts for this. I get a bit more money (than the other fishermen) by making goods (from the profits of manufacture). You see, I also make dried Ngay-gyi fish and Ngay-gyi-daung. I buy the fish from them and process it. I have not worked at INS all my life. I worked for about ten years at the time when the British king reigned. When the Japanese came I worked at INS no longer." (He then bought fish and sold the preparations.)

U Myaing gives the following supplementary information:

"There are ten leaders or foremen in the village, each of them taking charge of about seven or eight men. In all there are about eighty workers in the three sub-villages of Pathes working with us at our IN. About thirty or forty of these live in YIN-GIL-HEH on our side of the river. These are men working at our IN only. There are also workers living in the village who work in the six other INS of the neighbourhood. About a hundred of the two hundred families in YIN-GIL-HEH work INS. The rest process the fish, dry it, make ngayd etc., and to do this they have to buy the fish from the IN workers. Afterwards they sell to buyers who come from Upper Burma. Or sometimes they go upcountry in boats and steamers to sell the produce. Some people who are not IN workers go to the INS and help to extract fish oil. Fish like Ngay-gyi-daung yield about one viss of oil to every 10 viss of fish. The fish are cut open with a knife and the fat collected. The women come and help without payment and take home oil for themselves when they go back. The women of my household also used to do this."

251

263

226

474

463

[658]

226

463

621

[438]•

[561]

also need to do this. Sometimes they are able to extract about 5 viss of oil each in one day.

"There are also cultivators in the village. Some of those who work INS also own fields. They rent out the land to tenants. There are altogether 12 people in our village who own cultivation fields. But the biggest landowner does not own lands more extensive than three hundred acres. Some own 10 or 50 acres. Some engage cultivators and work their fields themselves, while others rent out the fields for a certain percentage of the produce.

"There were paid workers in the IN. They were paid, not a daily wage, but a monthly salary of Rs. 30/- without food. About 50 of the 80 workers were paid workers, though some of them owned shares as well. In addition to their pay, these paid workers received quite a lot of fish which their families went around selling. They get one or two basket-loads of fish to sell, and in this way make quite a lot of money.

"Fish is not distributed in this manner every day - only when the fish start coming down in great numbers. On these occasions however the workers get about 25 to 30 viss each - that is, by the boatload. Ordinarily they are given just enough for one meal.

"I also own eleven cows; eight for loaning out to cultivators and three for breeding purposes. No milk is drawn for human consumption because that is not the custom in our native place."

One yoke of oxen hired out brought U Myaing 50 baskets of paddy a year. He had 4 yokes. They kept by 100 baskets for home consumption and sold the rest at a rate fluctuating between Rs. 100/- and Rs. 175/- per hundred baskets.

In those years when U Myaing works at INS, he has to confine himself to such work only. During those years when he does not work at INS, he buys the fish from IN workers and process them for sale as NGAGI, NIA-CHAU, etc. Each year he uses between four to five thousand fish. When U Myaing his co-workers could not get an IN, he had to buy fish and make NIA-CHAU, (dried fish), NIAPI and NGAMPYAR-YE.

On his former visits to Rangoon U Myaing came in a boat loaded with NGAGI CHAU (dried NIA GYI) and transferred it to the care of a broker in Rangoon. He then ascended the Shwe Dagon pagoda platform, donated money and water, returned to the broker, and went around the town to places like Nagul Street (the Indian quarter) for meats and ate pilau-rice etc. It took three or four days, and sometimes about ten days for the broker to dispose of his goods and in this time he would go round all the pagodas in Rangoon like the Botadung, Sala, Nya-bhat-gyi etc. Once he went to a Chinese hotel known as the NAN-NIN hotel together with some traders from DASHU. They pooled the expenses. The journey home took a day and a night. He took back with him clothes, longyi, KINTIS, durian fruit,

226
463
621

421
463
621
427

226
463
465

231
[272]

226
463
433

226
438
484
[778]

- 18 -

726
• 438
484
[431]

oranges, guava fruit, mangosteen fruit - together worth about forty or fifty rupees. When he arrived at Pathwe this was distributed among the members of his family, and also some relatives and the phongyis. On one such trip he made Rs. 2700/- which he carried back hidden away in a jar of salt.

494
465

U Myaing never came in to Rangoon purely for a visit. Besides bringing down fish, U Myaing also came to Rangoon before the war to buy some motor parts and accessories such as tyres, tubes, etc. which they could not obtain in Pathwe village or in Pantanaw town. At that period in his life U Myaing used to drive a bus between Pathwe and the village on the bank of the river across from Pathwe. There was a cart track for a road, and they used to carry passengers at a rupee per head. In the rains this cart track became impossible and so they traversed this route only from TA-ZAUNG-BON to KASON months. U Myaing worked on this route for three summers. In the rains they shifted operations to the Maubin, Ye Le route, which was a 10 mile journey, and occasionally the 10 mile route from Ye Le to HSE-DALING-MAN. He worked at these places for two rainy seasons, from WESO right up till the month of TA-ZAUNG-BON. The bus was owned by his cousin who collected all the earnings for each day. At that time bus drivers were hired at Rs. 45/- a month, plus sweet tea, food, shelter and one packet of cigarettes a day. "In Pathwe all the houses were too large and could accommodate a great many more people than they actually did. This was because each one erected his own building after the example of the other houses in the village. The person who hired the bus driver merely installed him in his home".

[491]

[581]

This was when U Myaing was 17 or 18 years old. He was not paid anything, but the family was provided with everything they needed - food, clothes, etc. (U Myaing was still unmarried and the family consisted of two sisters, his mother and himself. (He did not marry till the age of thirty.) Both U Myaing and Daw Aw Zar estimated that the things they received from the bus owner would have amounted to much more than forty five rupees' worth.

[582]
[431]

-58-

301
435

KIN GYI THI (Jacket button) Buttons: — Buttons come in matched sets of five for use in fastening the jackets. They are detachable, and range from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter for the most part.

A set of silver buttons were received by the eldest daughter as a present from a medical student, Miss Margaret Gaudoin, 6 months ago in camp. Ma Aye Myaing, her eldest daughter and Daw Aye Zar each had a set of crystal buttons costing in Pathwe Rs. 3/- or 4/- in Japanese currency during the Japanese regime. Daw Aye Zar's set cost 12 annas. The children each had a set of green stone buttons costing Rs. 1/- in Pathwe. These items are still in use in camp.

Stone Slab for making Face Powder.

302
435

KYAU-PTIN: (Stone Slab) — These are circular stone slabs about 1 foot in diameter and $\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick. Pathwe: three were used by the family. One was received as a present from a friend. One, with a diameter of 14 inches was "100 years old" and handed down to Daw Aye Zar by her mother. The third was bought at Pantanaw for Rs. 4/-. All three were left behind in the move. Camp: one with a diameter of 6 inches was received as a present.

ON HSI (Coconut oil): — The oil of the coconut meat, a yellow, slightly viscous fluid with a characteristic odour is highly prized by the Burmese women as a hair dressing. Pathwe: 20 ticals of oil, costing 8 annas, would be used per month. Camp: a small quantity is occasionally bought lasting 2 days at a time. It is purchased in the refugee camp for 2 annas.

293
435

PATHEIN HTEK (Bassaintown umbrella) parasol: — These are made of cloth with bamboo ribs and handle. The cloth is painted with flowers and other designs in various bright colours. They are considered "elegant" and used primarily for social sunbathing. The town of Bassaintown is famous as a place of manufacture for parasols. Pathwe: the children had two parasols, lasting 6 months. These were bought in Pantanaw for Rs. 3/- each. Camp: none.

• [438]

HITEK umbrellas: — Ma Aye Myaing reports that she had an umbrella in Pathwe, the black cloth European kind, for which she paid Rs. 7/-. It lasted 8 or 9 months. One was bought in camp, second hand for Rs. 3/6 5 months ago. It is good for 2 months more.

DRY CULTIVATION

51

241
132
101
[138]



108. PLOUGHING IN THE DRY ZONE.

is a luxury in that region, and a part of the requirement is imported from Pegu. Crops of sorghum and millet (*pyawng, lu*), sesamum (*hnan*) and various pulses (*pu*), as well as cotton (*wa*), are obtained on the better sort of soil, during the light rains, from July to September. The dry soil is too hard for ploughing even when moistened by such rain as falls. It is scraped up with harrows instead. Four oxen are yoked abreast and

the driver rides on the beam of the harrow to give it weight.

241 The wet or staple cultivation of the whole country begins between June and
132 August, as soon as the grass-sod which has formed on the rice-fields in the
231 by-season—and which has served for pasture in the interval—has got thoroughly
water-logged. The soil is then turned, about six inches deep, with a wooden
plough (*te*, Nos. 102, 119) bearing a shoe of bronze or iron. Where elephants
are available, a large *thun* is used which does the work of four ploughs. The
clods left by the plough are broken fine, and the wet soil worked into slush
by herds of buffaloes driven round and round in the fields. If there are
not enough cattle, the plough-clods are worked down with harrows drawn by
buffaloes or oxen (No. 325). A rotary implement is coming into use to prepare
[136] the clods for the harrow (No. 168). There is very little open grass-land in

the moist region. Unless the scrub which springs up is cut, the land soon relapses into jungle.

241 For the above operations cattle are needful to
231 the cultivator, though he makes little use of the manure and does not use the milk at all. The cattle are only used for draught, and very little care is bestowed on breeding. Oxen



109. ELEPHANT PLOUGH.

WEAVING

With the exception of the stuff for the 59 386



126. SHOWING THE TARTAN.

beyond constructing the loom. Women spin and dye the yarn and weave the cloth. The lath of the loom (*lobla*) is of graceful outline—often elaborately carved—and is furnished with two ornamented metal pins, with loose metal rings, that jangle at each swing of the beam, and proclaim the industry of the young woman, to whom this business chiefly falls. Hence it comes that the loom is a favourite rendezvous. The same applies to other occupations of the girls, such as rice-cleaning, when the suitor will take a turn at the heavy part of the work and lounge while the sifting goes on. Common patterns of cloth are tartans, for which two or three shuttle-spools are required. The plainest cloth woven is at least shot with a colour different to that of the warp. The intricacy of a pattern is denoted by the number of spools. Scroll patterns (*chesib*) in silk are called *law-tayd* (hundred-spool). The warp is a cubit wide and about twenty cubits long, which makes a man's loin-cloth (*pass*). The piece is doubled and its edges sewn together along one side; the turn of the cloth serves as a bag or wallet, according as the piece is draped; it has no lining. The *pass* is hitched round the loins and girt long or short, according to fancy, without the help of a belt; but elastic belts are now coming in. The slack is worn in a bunch in front (*shaldungau*) or is thrown over the shoulder.

recluses' robes, cloth is not dyed in the piece, but in the yarn. Dyes used for cotton are also chiefly imported, but the indigenous dyes continue to be used for silk. The Burmese excel in yellows, oranges, deep reds, and rich deep greens, which they harmonise with beautiful effect. Their clear blues and purples are indifferent. Except in a few localities, where weaving is a speciality, the men take no share in the industry



127. PLAITING FLOOR-MATS (see p. 66).

286 [792]

[342]

286

462

[438]

[531]

[584]

286

286

291

[342]

FRUITS, VEGETABLES, FLOWERS

87



189. FRUIT-STALL IN JULY (TENASSERIM)

the villages. They demand little or no care. Fruit-trees on which proper care is bestowed are the custard-apple, orange, mangosteen and durian, the first of these in the dry region, the latter three in the moist south. The durian (*dayin*) requires about the same expenditure

245

[438]

of labour before it bears as the cocoanut; but the fruit is prized above all others. Its cultivation has been so much extended of late that average durians in the season cost only about double the price of green cocoanuts. Thirty years ago both durian and mangosteen used to cost two and three times as much as now. The limits of durian and mangosteen are 17° N. and 95° E. Only a small part of the habitat of both trees is included in Burma. Oranges, like most fruit trees in Burma, are grown from seed. The custard-apple is planted on terraced hillsides. It gives to the Irawadi at Prome a character which recalls the vineyards of the Rhine. The fruit of Burma, however, as of the tropics at large, is the plantain or banana (*hngettydw-thl*). Many varieties are cultivated, some of them very delicate. The plantain is propagated from suckers; after fruiting in the second year, the plant dies. The papaya (*thimbdw-ikl*, Nos. 407, 435) was introduced over sixty years ago and has spread everywhere. Of sweet fruits there remain the pine-apple, which is cultivated in the light shade of the orchards of jack, and the water-melon, grown in vegetable gardens together with cucumbers and vegetable marrows. The walnut and the chestnut flourish in the north. The vine bears there also, but is not extensively cultivated. Other nuts are the cashew kernel and the ground-nut (*ayw-ikl*); both have to be roasted. The kernels of



190. BIG MEET (PATTABUN).

[227]

333
341
[323]

213. KILN FOR PATTED WARES.

with betel. The limestone rocks abound in caves, many of which have been incrustated with images, and transformed into temples and shrines (No. 84), but the rock is not hewn. The lime is packed in baskets of leaf and bamboo-wicker, a stone or two in weight; it sells at the kiln for one and a half to two rupees a hundredweight. The tenacity of the Burman lime-plaster is very great. Strength is obtained by liberal use of lime, and in the better class of

work by the addition of glue and palm sugar. Hair and fibre are not added. For the first layers, coarse sand is mixed with the lime, for the finishing layers, fine sand. The decoration of the work is only roughly indicated in the masonry. The relief of the ornament is high, and the thickness of the stucco very considerable in parts. The stucco is frequently gilt, on *sedi* and images. The gold-size (*thissi*, p. 101) is applied direct to the plaster, which, however, in time, furnishes a soil for lichen, causing the gold to scale off.

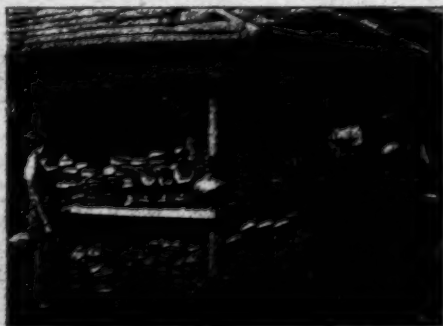
324
532

Although stone is not quarried in sufficient abundance for building except in Arakán, good stone for carving images is found in several places. The most notable of these is Taung-u, on the Irawadi, opposite Pagán. More important than the red sandstone industry of Taung-u is the industry at Sagáing, opposite Ava, on the Irawadi, where a beautiful white marble is quarried. The heavy blocks are hewn in the rough at the quarry and transported to the site of erection to be finished. The subjects are chiefly the conventional images of the Buddha, from a pound in weight to several tons (No. 218).

[323
438]

000

The cordage used in



214. POTTERY SHOP.

315

[432]

[322]



287. COUNTRY SALE-DEPOT.

about three million rupees. At present both wood-oil and crude earth-oil are being superseded by kerosene. The crude earth-oil is used for preserving woodwork. But its place is being taken by

- 438 the residues from the local refineries, now established in Rangoon.* Travelling
 443 pedlars hawk the silk goods of Burma Proper and all sorts of fancy nicknacks
 782 from the sea-ports to the villages of the interior. The approaches to the
 temples are favourite resorts of stall-keepers of all sorts of wares, especially
 of wax-tapers, plain and moulded, gold leaf, coloured paper flags and flowers for
 the votaries to decorate the shrines with, and toys wherewith to gladden the
 hearts of children—an act of merit befitting the shrine of religion in this cheerful
 land. In sad contrast to the gaiety of the booths is the spectacle of the lepers
 who beg for alms. The prominence of these unfortunates at such places creates
 a disproportionate impression of their numbers, high as these are (p. 41). The
 offerings dedicated on the occasions of *Shindung ftes.*, festivals, and funerals,
 make the trades of manufacturing and distributing the requisites of the *kyauing*
 very important ones. The wares collected in the *parikaya* shop used to be
 representative of the manu-
 factures of Burma. But of
 late, imported goods—crock-
 ery, glassware, lamps and
 clocks—have become a reg-
 ular part of the *kyauing*
 furniture, and are offered in
 meaningless profusion. This
 has helped to bring the *par-
 ikaya* trade into the hands
 of foreigners.

[277]

438

443

563

Every year, after the
 floods have subsided, Bur-
 man dealers establish dry-



288. ROLLING CHEROOTS.

* See *The Occurrence of Petroleum in Burma*, by Dr. F. Noetling.

MERCHANDIZE AND DEALERS

131

438
443
563

290. PAREIKAYA DEALER.

[366]

276

is nothing corresponding to the fairs of India and the West.

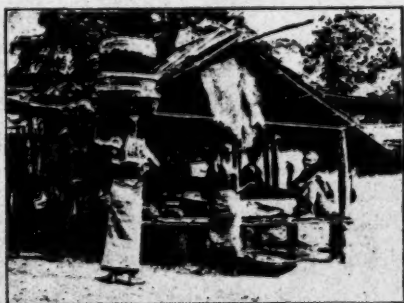
Both men and women smoke tobacco. Children begin at four or five (No. 21). The Burman cheroot (*seleik*) is a roll five to eight inches long and an inch thick, consisting of chopped tobacco-leaf and the pith of the tobacco stem, with a wrapper made of the inner skin of the spathe of the betel palm, or the spathe of maize, or else the leaves of *pauk*, *thandt* or *bambwe*, which are smoothed on a hot stone. The Burman exquisite toys with this cheroot much as the Japanese does with the fan. The fan is not affected by men or women in Burma. Good cheroots are also rolled of plain tobacco-leaf, in the Indian way; they are very strong. Unlike the Shans, Karéns and Chinese, with their pipes, and the natives of India with their hookah, the Burman sticks to the cheroot. Tobacco is grown on the silt banks left dry by the rivers (Nos. 191, 264); but the bulk is imported from the South of India. A delicate "birds-eye" tobacco is prepared by the Karéns and Shans on the North-East; it is shredded green, and does not keep well.

[249
439]

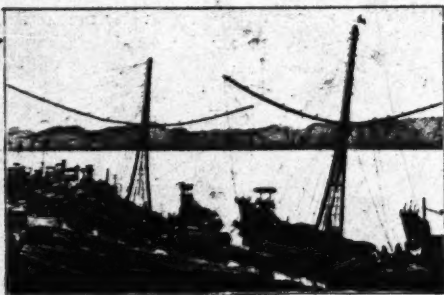
[432]

000 At intervals on the main lines of

weather sale-booths (*lawza*), for trade with the hill-people, at central points as far from the towns as canoes can navigate the stream. They sell dried fish and *ngaph*, salt, oil, pease, sugar, spices and tobacco, pottery and crockery, plain and coloured yarns, needles, thread, cloth of every sort, elastic belts, under-vests, matches, tapers and soap, kerosene oil, pencils, pens, ink and paper, playing-cards, beads, spectacles, mirrors and fancy articles from Europe, besides biscuits, sardines, and condensed milk. All these wares are sold in the larger villages as well. Sale-booths are set up at every festival, chiefly for refreshments. But there



291. BAZAR SCENE, BURMA PROPER.

501
435

302. SHIPPING-PORT ON THE IRAWADI.

Canoes cost from twenty to one hundred rupees. Since ship-building was started, boats of greater dimensions than could be built solid—eighty to one hundred tons—have been built of teak on the carvel method (*sat-hle*). But the lines of the *laung-gò* are rigidly adhered to. A hull exactly simulating the solid hull is built with stout ribs and sheathing; then the sides are added—a most re-

markable example of conservatism of type. These two classes of boats carry most of the rice to port. In Burma Proper, where timber does not attain such size as in the moist region, canoes only are made on the *laung-gò* plan; the larger boats have always been built up. In these the *laung-gò* type is also simulated, but not so closely (*laung-zdt*, Nos. 294, 300). The narrow bottom is flat and is fixed to the side-planks of the lower hull by ribs. The planks are two to three inches thick and ten to twelve inches broad; they are held together by nails driven obliquely from recesses near the seams, which are luted with dammar, and are strengthened with ribs. The upper side-planks are attached as in the *laung-gò*. Poop and prow are strengthened by iron dee-nails along the seams. The capacity of such boats ranges from twenty to one hundred and fifty tons, and they cost from 500 to 5,000 rupees. The crew consists of from five to twenty men. They only sail before the wind and carry an immense

501
502
438

expanse of sail, to stem the current of the Irrawadi, which runs four to five knots in the rains. The course of the river and the prevailing wind are in their favour. During the rains these craft make two trips, north and south, and lie by in the dry weather. They convey the produce of Pegu to Burma Proper,—



303. BURMAN SEA-GOING CRAFT (KATTU).

BOATS AND BOATMEN

137

501

502

438

[398]

[505]

[171]



305. BURMAN CARTWRIGHTS.

ngapi, dried fish, salt and rice, besides imported goods. They bring down the manufactures of the North—cutch, lacquer, images, and *pari-kaya* wares. They have to endure a formidable competition from the river steamers. In its existing form, the boat of Burma presents no near affinity to the boats of neighbouring peoples. The types of architecture which the Burmans borrowed from

India they have treated in a distinctive way which gives them independent interest. But the art which culminates in the stately ship of the Irawadi is purely their own achievement. The work derives unity from the noble balance of the masses and life from the spirited sweep of the curves. The severity of line is relieved by plastic incident in the rich carving. The structure itself is patent and not concealed (with the exception noted), and the decoration goes hand in hand with it. Besides their own type of boat, the Shan type (No. 320) has been developed into a large craft for carrying earth-oil in bulk—the *peingdu*.

[505]

315]

Two long, partially-hollowed teak logs form the sides of the lower hull, with several thick planks intervening, for the flat bottom. Two planks above these complete the sides, all held together by nails and ribs as in the *laungzat*. There are outriggered bamboo galleries for the crew to row and pole, which allow of the deck-house being carried from end to end, providing accommodation for several families. The rig is the same as in the *laungzat*. In tidal and salt waters, boats have to be beached once a month to bream the bottoms and destroy the teredo. The rest of the woodwork and tackle is protected with earth-oil.

[493]

501

[177]

The boats of Arakan are on Indian lines. There is

T



306. BUFFALO-CART.

ALIEN RACES

161

Ba
Bse
241 trees. All that the villagers asked for (and of course got) was exemption from
731 land-tax. Another hopeful feature is that the Burman is not devoid of the
563 quality of self-criticism. With the Indian retail trader comes also the wholesale
Ba merchant—Persian, Parsi, Sûrati, Chetti and Bania. And the Burmans at large
Bse accept the situation, never dreaming that by travelling abroad and seeing for
463 themselves how other nations manage and how they fare, they might learn to
[177] conduct their own business, and help to save Burma from sinking to the level of
563 proletariate countries. Natives of India and China have learned so much in
438 their capacities of assistants to European merchants that they are getting the
retail trade in European goods to themselves. Even as importers, with their
agents in Europe, they are making themselves independent of the European
merchant in the East. The European spheres of activity on which Burmans



300. EUROPEAN TYPE OF HOUSE.

have entered are saw-mill enterprise and the profession of advocacy, in which latter they have attained a high standing.

Ba
167 To the Burman, the native of India is the foreigner *par excellence*—*Kald*—
563 and shares the disrepute that a stay-at-home people commonly accord to the
Bse foreigner, especially when he is a needy one. To them he is the dog that eats
609 the crumbs which fall from his table ("*Kwe-Kald!*"). While the Chinaman,
563 despite his uncouthness and uncanny parasitic trade, is considered an eligible
man, *Kald-may*—nigger's wife—is a term of reproach. The *Kald* half-breeds
are called *Zerbidi*. They appear to possess fewer good qualities than either
of the pure races. The Euro-Burman half-breeds are called *Bayinjt*—(Feringhi,
the Indian equivalent of Frank) explained by the Burmans as *Bayin-dyt*
(adherent of) the Great Prince (the Pope).

Ba
Bse Europeans are the only remaining foreigners whom the Burmans encounter,
563 excepting a few Armenians, Jews and Malays. Armenians were beginning to play

ROYALTY, HISTORY

171



388. TEMPLES RAISED BY A MODERN KING (THE KUTHODAW
P. 122).

historic centres of Burman dominion. Sagging was abandoned for the last time in 1776 for a new capital at Amayapōya (*Amayapūra*—Abode of Immortals) half-way between Ava (*Inwa*) and the modern capital Mandalay, which was founded in 1857, after the accession of King Mindōn Min. The most ancient capital is Tagaung, one hundred

miles north of Mandalay. Other capitals were Shwebō, Myinzaing, Pannya. The capitals of the Taling dominion were Thatōn, Pegu, and Prome (*Pye*). Rangoon (*Yangōn*), at the meeting point of five navigable channels, and with anchorage for the largest ships, has out-distanced all competitors since the modern development of commerce.

For the history of Burma the only available source is the official chronicle kept by command of the kings—*maha-yazawetha*. The first part is occupied with the legendary origin of the race from the cloud-dwellers—*Byamma* (the Burman form of *Brahma*).^{*} The names and doings of legendary persons follow, and lines of legendary kings. The earliest historical facts which emerge are the founding of Tagaung, and incidents relating to the Buddha and the councils of his church in India. It is believed by Phayre that the *Savanna Bhumi* of ancient Indian books refers to Thatōn, and that under *Chrysē Chersonesus* Ptolemy refers to the Eastern Peninsula of Asia. We do not reach a connected history till the founding of Pagán about 100 A.D. From that epoch onwards the history of the peninsula, until the Burman Empire was consolidated and the dynasty of



389. FIGURES OF BYAMMA
(EMBROIDERY).

^{*} The name is also written *Myamma*, but commonly pronounced *Bam*, of which "Burma(h)" and "Birma" are corruptions.

644
633
[346]

[438]
178

175
[173]

[531
776]

[101]